

# The Jew in the United States

*"Though (in the United States) there is nothing corresponding to the anti-Semitic movements of continental Europe, an undoubted and extensive social prejudice against the Jews exists, which manifests itself in numerous petty though not insignificant ways, mainly in the Eastern States, where their numbers are greatest. It has assumed the form of excluding Jewish children from certain private schools, and their elders from clubs and some hotels."*

—The Jewish Encyclopedia.

THE story of the Jews in America begins with Christopher Columbus. On August 2, 1492, more than 300,000 Jews were expelled from Spain, with which event Spain's prestige began its long decline, and on August 3, the next day, Columbus set sail for the West, taking a group of Jews with him. They were not, however, refugees, for the prophetic navigator's plans had aroused the sympathy of influential Jews for a long period previously. Columbus himself tells us that he consorted much with Jews. The first letter he wrote detailing his discoveries was to a Jew. Indeed, the eventful voyage itself which added to men's knowledge and wealth "the other half of the earth" was made possible by Jews.

The pleasant story that it was Queen Isabella's jewels which financed the voyage has disappeared under cool research. There were three Maranos or "secret Jews" who wielded great influence at the Spanish court: Luis de Santangel, who was an important merchant of Valencia and who was "farmer" of the royal taxes; his relative, Gabriel Sanchez, who was the royal treasurer; and their friend, the royal chamberlain, Juan Cabrero. These worked unceasingly on Queen Isabella's imagination, picturing to her the depletion of the royal treasury and the likelihood of Columbus discovering the fabulous gold of the Indies, until the Queen was ready to offer her jewels in pawn for the funds. But Santangel craved permission to advance the money himself, which he did, 17,000 ducats in all, about \$20,000, perhaps equal to \$160,000 today. It is probable that the loan exceeded the expedition's cost.

Associated with Columbus in the voyage were at least five Jews: Luis de Torres, interpreter; Marco, the surgeon; Bernal, the physician; Alonzo de la Calle, and Gabriel Sanchez. The astronomical instruments and maps which the navigators used were of Jewish origin. Luis de Torres was the first man ashore, the first to discover the use of tobacco; he settled in Cuba and may be said to be the father of Jewish control of the tobacco business as it exists today.

Columbus' old patrons, Luis de Santangel and Gabriel Sanchez, received many privileges for the part they played in the work, but Columbus himself became the victim of a conspiracy fostered by Bernal, the ship's doctor, and suffered injustice and imprisonment as his reward.

From that beginning, Jews looked more and more to America as a fruitful field, and immigration set in strongly toward South America, principally Brazil. But because of military participation in a disagreement between the Brazilians and the Dutch, the Jews of Brazil found it necessary to emigrate, which they did in the direction of the Dutch colony of what is now New York. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor, did not entirely approve of their settling among his people and ordered them to leave, but the Jews had evidently taken the precaution to assure their being received even if not welcomed, because upon revoking the order of Stuyvesant, the Directors gave as one of the reasons for the Jews being received, "the large amount of capital which they have invested in the shares of the Company." Nevertheless they were forbidden to enter public service and to open retail shops, which had the effect of driving them into foreign trade in which they were soon exercising all but a monopoly because of their European connections.

## Anti-Jewish Laws Make New York Great Port

THIS is only one of the thousand illustrations which can be given of the resourcefulness of the Jew. Forbid him in one direction, he will excel in another. When he was forbidden to deal in new clothes, he sold old clothes—that was the beginning of the organized traffic in secondhand clothing. When he was forbidden to deal in merchandise, he dealt in waste—the Jew is the originator of the waste product business of the world; he was the originator of the salvage system; he found wealth in the debris of civilization. He taught people how to use old rags, how to clean old feathers, how to use gall nuts and rabbit skins. He has always had a taste for the furrier trade, which he now controls, and to him is due the multitude of common skins which now pass under various alluring trade names as furs of high origin. The idea of renovation gained commercial value through the Jew. In the "rag men" who blow tin horns through our cities and save the old iron, old bottles, old paper and old fabrics, we have the commercial descendants of those earlier Jews who turned adversity into success by converting the rubbish of the earth into material of value.

Unwittingly, old Peter Stuyvesant compelled the Jew to make New York the principal port of America, and though a majority of New York Jews had fled to Philadelphia at the time of the American Revolution, most of them returned to New York at the earliest opportunity, instinct seeming to make them aware that in New York was to be their principal paradise of gain. And so it has proved. New York is the greatest cen-

ter of Jewish population in the world. It is the gateway where the bulk of American imports and exports are taxed, and where practically all the business done in America pays tribute to the masters of money. The very land of the city is practically the holdings of the Jews. A list of the property owners of the metropolis reveals only at rare intervals a Gentile name. No wonder that Jewish writers, viewing this unprecedented prosperity, this unchecked growth in wealth and power, exclaim enthusiastically that the United States is the Promised Land foretold by the prophets, and New York the New Jerusalem. Some have gone even further and described the peaks of the Rockies as "the mountains of Zion," and with reason, too, if the mining and coastal wealth of the Jews is considered.

The new waterways proposal, which will make an ocean port of practically every great city on the Great Lakes and take from New York the prestige she has maintained by being the gateway toward which the principal railways narrowed, is being strongly protested at this time. And the strongest motive in opposing this most obvious betterment is that so much wealth counted in New York is not wealth at all, but fictitious values depending solely on New York remaining New York. When anything comes which will make New York merely a city on the coast, and not the city where the great taxers sit to levy their tribute, much Jewish wealth will decrease. It was fabulous before the war. What it is now the statisticians will hardly undertake to say.

## 700 Per Cent Increase in Half a Century

IN FIFTY years the increase in the Jewish population of the United States has been from 50,000 to more than 3,300,000. In the British Isles there are only 300,000, in Palestine only 100,000. It is fortunate for the Jew himself that in Great Britain his numbers are not larger, for the large and evident control he exercises in great matters would sometimes make it inconvenient for the poorer Jew, if he were abroad in England in large numbers. An unusually well-informed Briton says that anti-Semitism is always ready to break out in England upon sufficient cause, but it cannot break out against the inaccessible rich Jews who control in politics and international finance. It is probably true that the commonest real cause of anti-Semitism is the action of the international Jew who is often unknown and always secure, but the innocent victim of it is the poor Jew. Anti-Semitism, however, will be considered in the next article.

The figures representing Jewish population in Great Britain and the United States indicate that the colossal power wielded by international Jewish financiers is neither consequent nor dependent upon their number. The arresting fact about the Jew is his world-wide unchallenged power, coupled with comparative numerical inferiority. There are only about 14,000,000 Jews in the world; they are about as numerous as the Koreans. This comparison of their numbers with the Koreans will illustrate still more vividly the phenomenon of their power.

In the time of George Washington there were about 4,000 Jews in the country, most of them well-to-do traders. For the most part they favored the American side. Haym Salomon helped the Colonies out with the loan of his entire fortune at a critical moment. But they never assimilated, they did not take up the usual employments nor farming, they never seemed to care for the worry of manufacturing things, but only for the selling of them after they were made.

It is only of recent years the Jew has shown any capacity for manufacturing, and most of what he now engages in has grown up as an adjunct to his merchandising plans. By manufacturing, he saves a profit. The result has not been a decrease in cost to the public, but an increase. It is characteristic of Jewish business methods that economies are for the sake of the business, not for the sake of the public. The commodities in which there have been the most inexcusable and exorbitant increases in prices to the public, and the lines of business which have been most quickly frightened into lower prices without any explanatory change in the general economic situation have been those lines in which Jews exercise the widest control.

Business to the Jewish mind is money; what the successful Jew may do with his money after he gets it is another matter, but in the getting of it he never permits "idealistic slush" to interfere with the dollar. His dollar of profit is never "clipped" by any of the voluntary reforms by which a few men are trying to ameliorate the condition of the workers.

This is not by any means due to the hardness of the Jewish heart, but to the hardness of the Jewish view of business. Business is to it a matter of goods and money, not of people. If you are in distress and suffering, the Jewish heart would have sympathy for you; but if your house were involved in the matter, you and your house would be two separate entities; the Jew would naturally find it difficult, in his theory of

business, to humanize the house; he would deal with it after a manner which other people would call "hard," but he would not feel the charge to be just; he would say that it was only "business."

It is probably this way that the Jewish "sweatshops" of New York may be explained. When the susceptible people of the nation commiserated the poor Jews of the New York sweatshops, they for the most part did not know that the inventors and operators of the "sweatshop" method were themselves Jews. Indeed, while it is the boast of our country that no race or color or creed is persecuted here, but liberty is insured to all, still it is a fact which every special investigator has noted that the only heartless treatment ever accorded the Jew in the United States came from his own people, his overseers and masters. And yet there is no evidence that either the "sweater" or the "sweated" ever thought of it as inhumanity or as "heartless." It was "business." The "sweated" lived in the hope of having a roomful of people sewing for him or her some day. Their endlessly vital interest in "business" and their unflagging ambition to get further up the ladder and become masters in their own sweatshop, enabled them to work without the slightest sense of oppression or injustice which, after all, is the sorest thing about poverty. The Jews never regard work as a calamity, but neither do they regard subordinate positions as permanently theirs. Thus, they spend their energies in getting up and out rather than in lamenting the inconveniences of the place where they are and trying to improve it.

All this is individually excellent but socially harmful. The result is that, until recently, the lower ranges of employment were wholly unsupervised, and the higher circles never felt the necessity of devising industrial reforms and benefits. The record of the great Jews in charity is very noble; their record in industrial reforms is nil. With commendable sympathy toward their own people they will donate a part of their profits to rectify some of the human need resulting from the method by which they made their profits, but as for reforming the method by which they get their profits in order that the resulting need might be diminished or prevented, apparently it has never occurred to them. At least, while there are many charitable names among the wealthier Jews, there are no names that stand for an actual, practical humanizing of industry, its methods and its returns.

This, of course, is unfortunate; but it is intelligible; more than that, it is explanatory of many things for which the Jew is blamed by those who do not understand his nature. The Jew will go part way in sharing the results of his prosperity; he has not gone any length, save upon outer compulsion, in sharing the processes, or sharing wealth in the making. And while the social effect is the same as if this were done out of cruel insensibility and inhumanity, still it must be said that mostly it is done not out of such feelings, but out of the Jew's ingrained conception of the game of business. Some proposals of industrial reform appear as crazy to him as would a proposal to credit one baseball batter's hit to his opponent's score, just as a matter of humanity.

## Jewish Americans and American Jews

THE American Jew does not assimilate. This is stated, not to blame him, but merely as a fact. The Jew could merge with the people of America if he desired, but he doesn't. If there is any prejudice existing against him in America, aside from the sense of inquiry which his colossal success engenders, it is because of his aloofness. The Jew is not objectionable in his person, creed, or race. His spiritual ideals are shared by the world. But still he does not assimilate; he cultivates by his exclusiveness the feeling that he does not "belong." This is his privilege, and from one point of view it may indicate excellent judgment, but he must not make it one of the grounds of his complaint against Gentiles in general, as he has a tendency to do. It is better that he should make it clear to Gentiles once and for all where true Jews stand in the matter, as when a young Jew said—"There is all the difference in the world between an American Jew and a Jewish American. A Jewish American is a mere amateur Gentile, doomed to be a parasite forever."

The ghetto is not an American product but the Jew's own importation. They have separated themselves into a distinct community. Speaking of this matter the Jewish Encyclopedia says: "The social organization of the Jews resident in America has differed little from that in other countries. . . . in the main, and without any compulsion, Jews preferred to live in close proximity to one another, a peculiarity which still prevails."

To make a list of the lines of business controlled by the Jews of the United States would be to touch most of the vital industries of the country—those which are really vital, and those which cultivated habit has made to seem vital. The theatrical business, of course, as everyone knows, is exclusively Jewish. Play-producing, booking, theater operation are all in the